

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested. It is earnestly believed that the present amendment places the application in condition for allowance and, thus, entry of the amendment is appropriate.

The present amendment was not earlier presented because Applicant believed that the arguments submitted with the amendment dated June 19, 2003 overcame the rejections of the claims. The present amendment does not raise any new issues and does not require any further searching on the part of the Examiner. It is respectfully submitted that the present amendment places the application in condition for allowance and allowance is respectfully requested.

The allowance of claims 3 and 5 is acknowledged with appreciation.

Claim 4 has been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 USC §112, second paragraph.

Claims 1 and 4 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Hill (US 5,813,696).

Claim 1 states that the detachable connection is severed by an unfolding of the side wall. Claim 1 therefore structurally define over the patent to Hill since it is the movement of the side wall which permits the connection to be severed.

The patent to Hill shows in Figure 1 a condition of an air bag in which front panel of the bag is at its maximum

distance from the rear portion which is allowed by first portion 70 of tether 60 (col. 4, lines 27-31).

Hill specifies that starting from the condition shown in Fig. 1, the first portion of the tether 60 breaks when the tensile load on the first portion exceeds a predetermined threshold value (Hill, col. 4, lines 43-48) which is achieved by the center panel moving away from the base portion 40 not the unfolding of the side wall. Accordingly, claim 1 should be allowed.

Claim 4 contains the feature that the front wall and back wall is connected to each other such that the front wall cannot separate from the back wall as long as the connection remains in tact and the connection is severed as a consequence of the side walls unfolding. As stated previously, Hill specifies that starting from the condition shown in Fig. 1, the first portion of the tether 60 breaks when the tensile load on the first portion exceeds a predetermined threshold value (Hill, col. 4, lines 43-48) which is achieved by the center panel moving away from the base portion 40 not the unfolding of the side wall. Thus, claim 4 should be allowable.

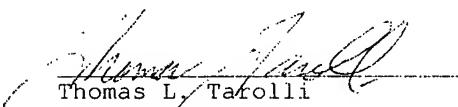
Claim 6 includes the features that there is a functional connection between the side wall and the detachable connection which results in severing the detachable connection. This is a specific structural difference from the structure of the patent to Hill where there is no functional connection between the side wall and the tether 60. Thus, claim 6 should be allowable.

Claim 7 includes the features that a latch element is coupled to the side wall for severing the detachable connection in response to an unfolding of the side wall when the bag is inflated. Hill does not include a latch coupled to the side wall. Thus, claim 7 should be allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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